



**Grafton Affordable Housing Trust**  
30 Providence Road  
Grafton, MA 01519

**MEETING MINUTES**  
**Grafton Affordable Housing Trust**  
**Thursday, March 9, 2023**  
**7:45pm**  
**Conference Room A**  
**Grafton Memorial Municipal Center**  
**AND**  
**via Zoom**

RECEIVED TOWN CLERK  
GRAFTON, MA  
2023 APR 21 AM 9:35

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Spinney at 7:48pm. In attendance by roll call were Chair Bruce Spinney, Clerk Dan Cusher, Select Board Representative Mat Often via Zoom, Ed Prisby, and Eric Swenson via Zoom. Also in attendance were Town Planner Fiona Coughlan via Zoom, Administrative Assistant Amber Diffenderfer, and Trust Counsel Kathleen O'Donnell via Zoom.

**Update on 25 Worcester Street RFP**

Mr. Spinney stated that the inquiries and site tour were completed. Ms. Diffenderfer stated that bids close on April 5, and there are 17 plan holders.

**Meeting Minutes**

Mr. Prisby made a motion seconded by Mr. Cusher to approve the meeting minutes for February 7 and February 9 of 2023 as drafted. Motion passed 5 – 0 by roll call vote.

**Annual Report and Funding Request to the Community Preservation Committee**

Mr. Spinney stated that he would attend the next CPC meeting to answer any questions about CPA funds allocated to the Trust and discuss their funding application for next year, which does not include 25 Worcester Street.

Mr. Swenson stated that the Rental Assistance Program would be on the warrant for Spring Town Meeting, and all of CPC seemed to support the program at their initial meeting.

**Update on GSX Grant Agreement – 17 & 27 Upton Street**

Ms. O'Donnell stated that she sent a message to GSX's counsel after the Trust's last meeting regarding the discussed changes to the Grant Agreement but has not heard back.

Mr. Spinney and Ms. Coughlan noted that the current negotiations with GSX are focused on a potential extension of the Purchase and Sale Agreement with the Select Board.

**Presentation of 5 Millennium Drive LIP Proposal**

Bill Lovett of Claremont Companies spoke about the company's background.

Mr. Prisby asked if this project would impact the number of units within the new MBTA Communities zoning law. Ms. Coughlan stated that the action plan had been approved and they are now testing the compliance module. She noted that this project would not alter that process.

Mr. Lovett presented the 233-unit LIP proposal to the Trust.

To answer a question from Mr. Prisby, Mr. Lovett stated that all the developments except Aeronaut in the Representative Multi-Family Portfolio were 40Bs.

Ms. O'Donnell asked if the 1.6 parking spaces per unit could be reduced, since the property is located next to a train station. Mr. Lovett stated that they would consider designing the site with fewer spaces but allow for paving of additional parking areas if needed. He highlighted that using the train would be encouraged, but he expects many residents will still own vehicles.

Mr. Spinney and Mr. Lovett discussed the studios, one-bedrooms, two-bedrooms, and three-bedrooms each having 25% of the units be affordable at 80% AMI.

Mr. Lovett noted an error in the presentation, as water is not a source of revenue for the Town.

Mr. Spinney, Mr. Often, and Mr. Lovett discussed the metric used for the SAC Multiplier, which is also used by Eastland Partners. Mr. Prisby noted that adding 50 students to the schools will not actually cost an additional \$500,000 as presented.

Mr. Often highlighted the importance of a walking path from the property to the train station. Mr. Lovett described where this accessible path would be located on the site plan.

Ms. Coughlan agreed to follow up with Mr. Spinney and Mr. Lovett about the volume of traffic allowed on Centech Boulevard.

Mr. Prisby expressed his support for this project as it meets the goal toward safe harbor and has an appropriate location.

Mr. Often stated that Ray Mead of the Select Board would be negotiating this project and recommended that the Trust communicate with him about their requests.

Mr. Prisby stated that he would like a lower AMI for some of the affordable units and a greater number of three-bedroom units. Mr. Often appreciated the benefit to the community by providing units at lower AMI thresholds. Mr. Lovett noted that there is not a high demand for three-bedroom units at the market rate, which makes them less financially viable. Mr. Lovett stated that he could consider shifting the affordability to make more than 25% of the three-bedroom units affordable.

#### **Discuss CMRPC Regional Housing Coordinator Program with Town Planner**

Ms. Coughlan described the new program which would provide four hours per week of technical assistance to Grafton from a Regional Housing Coordinator, who would also serve Auburn, Berlin, Shrewsbury, and Mendon at no cost for the first year. She stated that a member of the Select Board offered to serve as the alternate to her position on the program's advisory board if no members of the Trust are interested in the role. Mr. Prisby agreed to serve as the alternate.

Mr. Spinney and Mr. Often discussed plans to hire an Assistant Town Planner in the following fiscal year. Ms. Coughlan stated that the Planning Department is currently working with a consultant.

Ms. Coughlan agreed to follow up with Mr. Cusher after clarifying the cost of the program in future years with CMRPC.

#### **Update on Housing Production Plan**

Ms. Coughlan spoke about her meeting with Ms. Diffenderfer, ZBA Administrative Assistant Katrina Koshivos, and Consultant Karen Sunnarborg to discuss the Housing Production Plan. Ms. Coughlan described the progress made by Ms. Sunnarborg and the next steps.

Mr. Prisby and Ms. Coughlan discussed the new census data, which has Grafton's total housing inventory at 7,750.

Ms. Coughlan spoke about the Planning Department's submission of requests to DHCD for new units to be included in the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory. Ms. O'Donnell explained that units can be counted toward the SHI when the building permit is issued but will fall off if there is no certificate of occupancy.

Mr. Prisby highlighted the importance of maintaining safe harbor to negotiate with developers. Mr. Spinney, Ms. O'Donnell, and Mr. O'Brien discussed gauging the viability of different developers.

#### **Discuss CMRPC Regional Housing Coordinator Program with Town Planner (Continued)**

Ann Marie Foley of the Select Board stated via Zoom that she would send some notes about the program and the advisory board alternate member position to Ms. Diffenderfer for the Trust.

#### **Adjourn**

Mr. Prisby made a motion seconded by Mr. Cusher to adjourn at 9:20pm. Motion passed 5 – 0 by roll call vote.

The Trust's meeting materials are available at: <https://www.grafton-ma.gov/AgendaCenter/Affordable-Housing-Trust-3>

A recording of this meeting is available at: <https://youtu.be/8I4w0ix6I54>